



Faculty of Language and Communication

**A NARRATIVE ANALYSIS ON EXPERIENCES AS MIGRANT
WORKERS IN SELANGOR, MALAYSIA**

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Bachelor of Arts with Honours (Linguistics)

Universiti Malaysia Sarawak

2020

A NARRATIVE ANALYSIS ON EXPERIENCES AS MIGRANT WORKERS IN SELANGOR, MALAYSIA

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A final year project report submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Bachelor
of Arts with Honours (Linguistics)

Faculty of Language and Communication

UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to give my outmost acknowledgement and my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Madam Yvonne Michelle Campbell. Thank you for all the knowledge that you have imparted to me. I am aware that I am not the 'ideal' supervisee so I am thankful that you were always there to answer any questions that I had. I would like to thank both of my parents. She was my interpreter for all the colloquialism of Bazaar Malay that I am not familiar with. The interviews could not have happened without her nor my father. His wide personal network of migrant workers has helped me greatly. Lastly, my appreciation goes to each and every one of the 15 research participants who had willingly open up themselves for the interview and allowed me to step into their world, even if it was just for a short while.

ABSTRACT

A NARRATIVE ANALYSIS ON EXPERIENCES AS MIGRANT WORKERS IN SELANGOR, MALAYSIA

SITI SARRAH BINTI ABDUL MOHSIN

This study aims to analyse construction of identity, the strategies employed in the process and common themes found in autobiographical narratives of migrant workers. The methodology used in this research includes semi-structured interviews, narrative analysis and thematic analysis. The interviews were carried out on 15 migrant workers from Indonesia, Bangladesh and Pakistan in order to obtain narrative data. Data were later analysed using Bamberg's 3-Level of Positioning Theory (1997) for narrative analysis and Braun and Clarke's Six-Phases of Thematic Analysis (2006) for thematic analysis. Findings from the study shows that participants employed discursive strategies such as direct positioning, involvement and collectivisation and linguistics devices such as constructed dialogue, pronoun and attributes during identity construction and management. Meanwhile, there are three overarching themes that were identified: motivation for migration, identity as a migrant worker and life as a migrant worker.

ABSTRAK

SUATU ANALISIS NARATIF TERHADAP PENGALAMAN SEBAGAI PEKERJA ASING DI SELANGOR, MALAYSIA

SITI SARRAH BINTI ABDUL MOHSIN

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pembinaan identiti, strategi yang digunakan dalam proses itu serta tema-tema utama dalam naratif autobiografi pekerja asing. Metodologi yang digunakan dalam kajian termasuklah wawancara separa berstruktur, analisis naratif dan analisis tematik. Wawancara dijalankan ke atas 15 orang pekerja asing dari Indonesia, Bangladesh dan Pakistan untuk memperoleh data naratif. Data kemudiannya dianalisis menggunakan teori Bamberg's 3-Level Positioning (1997) untuk analisis naratif dan Braun dan Clarke's 6-Phases of Thematic Analysis (2006) untuk analisis tematik. Dapatan kajian mendapati peserta menggunakan strategi diskursif seperti pengedudukan langsung, penglibatan dan kolektivisasi serta alatan linguistic seperti pembinaan dialog, kata ganti nama diri dan atribut semasa proses pembinaan dan pengendalian identiti. Sementara itu, terdapat tiga tema utama yang telah dikenal pasti iaitu dorongan untuk migrasi, identity sebagai pekerja asing dan kehidupan sebagai pekerja asing.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of The Research Problem

Since their beginnings, humans have always been on the move. Today, 3.5 per cent of the world's population – at least 272 million people – live outside of their country of origin and this number rises steadily each year (UN International Migration, 2019). In the same report, Malaysia has more than 3.4 million migrants, making it the second country in the Southeast Asia region to have the highest number of international migrants. Accounting for 10 percent of Malaysia's total population, majority of these migrants are of low-skilled workers (Azizah Kassim, 2014). While 10 percent does not seem like a huge number, Malaysia's dependency on migrant workers to help meet the needs of the rapid industrialisation that it is currently experiencing, makes migrants and migration as an important, socially relevant phenomenon in the country.

This view aligned with that of De Fina's (2003) who claims that the importance of immigration does not simply lies on its numerical significance, but also in the effects it brings socially, economically and psychologically to both immigrants and its host countries. The constant discussions on this topic in various circles and the mass media served as a proof of the centrality of the role migrants and immigration have on a country's political and social landscape. Therefore, De Fina insists on the significance of migration studies. She believes in order to gain insight into this phenomenon, immigrant realities, particularly immigrant identities needed to be studied. She adds, migrants suffer from stereotyping and by focusing on their identities, overgeneralisation can be defeated and show the complexity of their experiences. Consequently, De Fina's belief becomes the basis for the existence of this study.

A common way of studying migrant identities has been through the collection of narratives – stories and experiences – which are told by the migrants themselves. Overseas, there had been a variety of research on migrant identities in narratives across various contexts. Studies such as the one done by De Fina (2011) reveals language ideologies in the language experiences of Latin American immigrant women in the US while Dalmau (2015) discovers how transnational Ghanaians in Spain categorised membership in communities by employing linguistics devices. Overall, identity studies on migrants are not necessarily focused only on the usage of linguistics features, but they are also done to reveal viewpoints of migrants and how they represent themselves and others.

In regard to Malaysia and migrant workers, identity studies are near to none with Dannecker (2005)'s exploration of the construction of the 'Others' identity on Bangladeshi migrant workers in the country's multi-ethnic context being the only prominent work available. This is most probably because migration studies in Malaysia favoured macro themes such as welfare and migration flow and research that focus on migrants from external viewpoints. Dannecker (2005) mentions that the economic and demographic aspects of international migration are widely discussed but there seems to be less interest in the migrants themselves. Research done that are the closest to migrant identity studies are those of migrants' representations in media such as a study by Sheren Razzaq (2012) which found a lot of negative representations of migrant workers in the The Star Online Newspaper.

However, all and all, there is a lack of research on migrant workers through the lens of sociolinguistics study, narrative and identity analysis within the Malaysian context which serve as a gap of knowledge in this study. Other than attempting to fill this gap, this study also aims to provide a better understanding on the circumstances of migrant workers in Malaysia.

1.1 Aim and Objectives of Study

1.1.1 Aim

The study aims to analyse the construction of identities in autobiographical narratives as migrant workers in Selangor, Malaysia.

1.1.2 Objectives

The objectives of this research are:

- i. To examine how identities are being constructed and managed by the migrant workers.
- ii. To explore common themes found in the narratives.

1.2 Operational Definition of Terms

1.2.1 Narrative

Narrative is widely studied in various academic disciplines and due to its interdisciplinary nature, it is not always possible to arrive at a single definition that can encapsulate the meaning of narrative. However, according to Blundell (2016), one of the themes that frequently emerges in discussions on the nature of narrative is that narrative is about telling a story. The study of narrative, within the linguistics field, has been mostly on finding out what constitutes as a story. Watson (2007, p. 372) said that traditionally, narrative is viewed as “events placed in a sequential order with beginning, middle and end; events must add up to something; there should be a narrator and an audience; characters and conflict”. Meanwhile, De Fina and Tseng (2017) sees narratives as a basic way of comprehending and sharing of experiences. According to them, while the terms ‘story’ and ‘narrative’ are often used synonymously, they are not always necessarily the same. Narratives includes “a wide gamut of

less-canonical tellings including hypothetical, habitual and generic narratives, small stories, and other genres that do not fit the classical Labovian definition” which describes stories as being chronologically structured events that happen in the past (De Fina & Tseng, 2016, p. 381). In this study, narrative serve as a data and is obtained by interviewing migrant workers on their migration and daily life experiences in Malaysia. Narrative analysis, which is a genre of analytic frames used by researchers to interpret stories that are told (Parcell & Baker, 2018), is used on the data to analyse how identities are being constructed in migrant narratives.

1.2.2 Autobiographical Narrative

According to Bruner (2001, p. 27), autobiographical narrative comprises of a narrator in the “here and now” who takes the responsibility in describing the progression of a protagonist in the “there and then” with the protagonist happens to share the same name as the narrator. The narrator will eventually bring the past to the present and connect the identities of the protagonist and themselves in a way that “the protagonist and the narrator eventually fuse and become one person with a shared consciousness”. In a much simpler term, autobiographical narratives are also defined as stories of events in their lives that people remember (and often tell) such as memories of important personal events (McAdams, 2007). In this study, autobiographical narrative is a type of narrative data and refers to the experiences told by the migrant workers through conducted interviews by the researcher.

1.2.3 Identity

Identity is a socially constructed characteristic of a person (Cameron, 2001). Cameron adds, rather than obtaining it right at the beginning of life and remains the same till the end, an

individual's identity constantly changes and is continuously being constructed throughout their lives. Blommaert (2005) asserts that "people don't have identity" and instead, "identities are constructed in practices that produce, enact, or perform identity" (as cited in Davids, 2009). In relation to languages, Kroskrity (2000, p. 111) defines identity as "the linguistic construction of membership in one or more social groups or categories". He adds, when it comes to constructing identity, language is as important as other non-linguistic elements that are significant to the process. Identity has been a subject in many studies relating to migration and Bamberg's Positioning Theory (1997) are among the commonly used theory in analysing migrants' identities. Therefore, in this study, this theory is used as a theoretical framework in studying the construction of identities among migrant workers in Selangor, Malaysia through their narratives.

1.2.4 Migrant Worker

In the Malaysian context, a migrant worker is a person who moved from another country to Malaysia in order to work for a particular period of time (Che Hashim Hassan, 2006). Most of the workers came from economically less developed Southeast countries such as Indonesia, Bangladesh, the Philippines and Nepal through legal or illegal means (Sheren Razzaq, 2012) and takes up low skilled jobs in sectors such as manufacturing, construction and home maid services (Kok, 2011). In this study, participants are of migrant workers that are currently working in Selangor, Malaysia.

1.2.5 Themes

According to Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 83) a theme “captures something important about the data in relation to the research questions, and represent some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set. In the narrative study, Riessman (2007) states that a thematic approach focuses on the content or ‘whats’ of the stories (as opposed to the structure) and attempts to find common elements in order to theorize across cases. In this study, themes refer to the common topics within the context of migration that are found by observing the patterns in the obtained narrative data.

1.3 Significance of Study

This study aims to analyse how identities are being constructed and occurring themes in narratives among migrant workers in Selangor, Malaysia. There had been a lot of studies relating to migration and immigrant identities across various situations (e.g., Blundell, 2016; Haapasaari, 2018), however they are all done on migrant communities residing in countries with differing contexts to Malaysia. It is also important to note that these migrants are – the more accurate term - immigrants with plans to live permanently in the host country and acquire either a permanent residency or citizenship. Therefore, this study is significant due to its focus on temporary migrant workers as a comparison can be made between the findings of this research with past studies to see whether a correlation between different types of migrants and their constructed identities exists.

In relation to migrants in Malaysia, past research studies done have gravitated towards studying trends in migration flow and economic growth using quantitative approaches (e.g., Che Hashim Hassan, 2009). On the other hand, qualitative studies on migrants are equally as

much but like quantitative research, the research are done from an external viewpoint with studies on migrant identities and representations are few and far between. Therefore, this study serves as an addition to the research on migrant workers within the Malaysian context in the language field as well as a reference to conducting future studies that use the same research landscape.

De Fina (2003) highlights that qualitative studies on migrant communities are important to find out how migrants fit into the host society as well as to provide information about a community that often being stereotyped and misjudged. For that reason, research such as this, helps to foster a better understanding into the realities and issues faced by migrant workers in Malaysia. These understandings can be used alongside other research on migrant workers within different fields to encourage the production of better policies and rights for migrant workers in Malaysia as well as forging a better relationship with the community.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This study is concerned with the construction of identities in autobiographical narratives among migrant workers in Malaysia. Therefore, this chapter will give an overview on past studies and literature done within and outside of Malaysia in relation to migrants, the role of narrative in migration studies as well as migrant identity study in the narrative form. By synthesising the literature, a look into the research landscape and the knowledge gap of study in which this research proposed to embark on, is given.

2.1 Migration and migrants

As a research field, migration studies have developed rapidly over the past decades and spans all types of internal and international migration, migrants and migration-related diversity. According to King (2002, p. 91), the field of migration studies is separated into two different branches: (i) “the study of the actual act of migration as movement across space”, and (ii) “the study of ethnic communities and diasporas that are the product of migration”.

The first branch is the focus for a lot of quantitative studies on migration. Pisarevskaya, Levy, Scholten, and Jansen (2019) state that most ‘early’ migration research is of quantitative nature. Using methods like survey, descriptive statistics and regression, researchers analyse quantifiable aspects of migration such as migration flow and demographics in migration stock. In Malaysia, quantitative research is popular and involves studying trends of migrants’ inflow in order to better understand their role in the country (e.g., Carpio et al., 2015; Nasri Bachtiar, Rahmi Fahmy, & Rahmah Ismail, 2015).

However, beginning in the 1990s, there is a shift of interest towards the qualitative take on migration studies by researchers in the social sciences. Research became more focused on migrant experiences and national policies on migrants (Pedraza-Bailey, 1990) as well as from the ‘who’ and ‘what’ questions to the ‘how’ and ‘why’s (Pisarevskaya, Levy, Scholten, & Jansen, 2019). Studies in this area range from impacts of migration to migrant’s welfare and representations. In a study done by Bloch, Sigona and Zetter (2011), qualitative approaches have assisted them in exploring migration routes and strategies among young undocumented migrants in England. The migrants who are living in Birmingham, London and Manchester are hailed from different parts of the world such as Brazil, China, Ukraine and Turkey. By doing in-depth interviews with the migrants, the study managed to uncover first-hand accounts on reasons behind the migration, the irregular journeys taken to enter the country and strategies used to obtain immigration statuses. This leads to a less biased result of study which shows the complexities and variations behind the decision to migrate and how they are strongly influenced by the country of origin.

Elsewhere in the world, Bloch, Sigona and Zetter (2011)’s study is just one of the many other qualitative migration studies that focuses on first-hand accounts of migration experiences. However, the same cannot be said to the migration studies done within the Malaysian context. In Malaysia, issues on impacts of migration on the country, strategies on coping with these impacts as well as migrants’ rights through a third-person perspective have dominated the qualitative studies on migration in various fields. Che Hashim Hassan (2009), for example, discusses on the trends, impacts, problems and strategies to overcome these problems in relation to foreign labour in Malaysia. In his study, he uses a mixture of quantitative and qualitative approaches where statistics and figures are used to examine foreign labour inflow along with its impacts while solution to these impacts are elaborated qualitatively. In her research, Azizah

Kassim (2014) uses the same techniques to study trends, policies, issues and challenges regarding transnational population in Malaysia. Instead of focusing only on foreign labour, she categorised the international migrant community in the country into five groups: low-skilled workers, expatriates, international students, participants of the 'Malaysia My Second Home' programme and asylum seekers/refugees. Meanwhile, Intan Hamzah and Sity Daud (2016) also did a study on the implications of foreign worker inflow to the country. However, unlike the previous two studies, qualitative is the main method used with police officers and officers from agencies such as the Ministry of Home Affairs are being interviewed for data collection. Overall, among these three studies, a similarity can be found where all of them use a third-person perspective in their article. The results of all three research also indicate a rising trend in the international migrant flow and the need for effective strategies by the government in coping with the problems that have resulted from the trend.

A less common type of qualitative migrant studies – but, important – in Malaysia is the representation of migrants. In her study, Sheren Razzaq (2014) did a discourse analysis of the representation of migrant workers and the argumentation strategies employed to justify and legitimise that representation in the *The Star Online* newspaper. Using Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach and Van Leeuwen's Socio-Semiotic Network frameworks, she discovered that migrant workers are often represented negatively in the Malaysian newspapers and associated to crime, economic instability and job competition. Studies which are similar to this proposed research and are related to the representation of migrant identities in the Malaysian context are almost non-existent. Dannecker (2005)'s study on Bangladeshi migrant workers in Malaysia, being the only prominent work available, will be discussed in section 2.3.

2.2 Narrative

Besides linguistics, narrative has been the subject of study in numerous fields such as psychology, anthropology and literary criticism. Bamberg (2012) states that narrative offers a view into two different areas: (i) where speakers explain their experiences on particular events as an individual and the subjective meanings behind those experiences, and (ii) where narrative means or devices are used in sense-making. These two areas concern with how narrative serve both as a form of genre and method. In the social sciences, the increase in the usage of narrative data and narrative analysis as a methodological tool began in the 1980s, in what was called the ‘narrative turn’ (Blundell, 2016). As a genre, narrative allows the telling of experiences in various forms such as memoirs, confessions, autobiographies and life histories in relation to issues like histories, social movements and identities. Since this study is focused on autobiographical narrative, this section will discuss narratives of personal experiences in the oral form.

In her article, Riessman (2005) describe narrative as a form of analysis that can exists in four types of models: (i) thematic analysis, (ii) structural analysis, (iii) interactional analysis, and (iv) performative analysis. The first approach, the thematic analysis is functional in theorising across different cases by identifying common thematic elements in the research participants and their narratives. Furthermore, this type of analysis highlights on the content of a text, rather than how it is said. However, in structural analysis, the interest lies in the telling of a story. While thematic content is not fully lost in the study, an emphasis is made in examining how a narrator uses narrative devices to deliver a story. On the other hand, interactional analysis centres on the dialogic process between a narrator and its audience. This model analyses how the teller and the listener work with each other to create meanings in storytelling. The fourth approach, the performative analysis is an extension of the interactional

method. Through this model, storytelling is seen as being performed by a ‘self’ (of the narrator) rather than simply telling it alone. When using this analysis, researchers look for certain features in storytelling like characters’ positionings, the settings, reported speech and audience’s responses to the story. Performative analysis is also being experimented by researchers in identity studies (Riessman, 2003).

2.2.1 Narrative in migrant studies

According to De Fina and Tseng (2017), the narrative turn, which shows a shift of interest from quantitative landscape towards a more qualitative analytical approaches, has helped in highlighting the importance of narrative as a way of understanding. As a result, storytelling is seen as a potential means for minorities and less represented communities to voice on life experiences from their point of view. Under this view, research on migrant become prominent because a primary empirical goal to create awareness on the processes of migration as experienced by the migrants themselves, exist as a way to counterbalance the negative views expressed in political discourse and mainstream media on marginalised communities.

While the boundary is not fully fixed, De Fina and Tseng (2017) said that narrative in the study of migrants can be broadly grouped into two fields: (i) research that focused on the types of representations that migrants form on their identities, experiences and relationship with external groups through storytelling, and (ii) research that focused on the usage of storytelling among communities of migrants and institutions that deals with them.

A researcher that is well-known in conducting studies relating to the first field is De Fina herself. In De Fina and King (2011)’s study, they examine how Latin American immigrant women in the US construct language experiences through their narratives. The data of the study

were collected by interviewing 15 women who migrated to Washington, D.C in the US from different countries in the South America region on their language experiences and perceptions on language policies. Meanwhile, the data was analysed using a mix of positioning theories - like the one by Bamberg (1997) – and categories of story events as proposed by Labov (1972). During the study's analysis, De Fina and King found that the women's narratives on language experiences can be divided into two types: (i) language conflicts; where other characters use the protagonist's lack of competency in English as a basis to carry out aggression on her, and (ii) language difficulties; where the protagonist experience problems as a result of her lack of competency in English. They also note the linguistic devices employed such as the use of pronouns and certain words by the women to strengthen their claims and arguments. Overall, the study help provide an understanding on how language ideologies manifest in narratives.

Meanwhile, an example of past research related to the second field of narrative in the study of migrants is the one done by Loganathan, Rui, Ng, and Pocock (2019). This research is one of the very few studies done on migrants' narratives in Malaysia. In their study, Loganathan et al. (2019) aimed to discover the accessibility of healthcare services to migrant workers. The study uses the data collected from 17 in-depth interviews conducted with important individuals from various parties like civil society organisations, trade unions, migrant workers and their representatives as well as medical professionals that are working in hospitals and clinics frequented by migrants. The data was then analysed using thematic analytical approach in order to pinpoint the problems faced by migrants in accessing healthcare services which also serve as the major themes in the obtained narrative data. The results of the study reveal that migrants often have trouble gaining access to healthcare services in the country due to reasons linked to language barriers, financial constraints, lack of legal documents and discrimination. In

conclusion, studies such as this, emphasise the use of storytelling in portraying the relationship between migrants and external institutions.

2.3 Identity and narrative

The study of identity often go hand in hand with narrative. As Georgakopoulou (2002) states:

If selves and identities are constituted in discourse, they are necessarily constructed in stories. Through storytelling, narrators can produce ‘edited’ descriptions and evaluations of themselves and others, making identity aspects more salient at certain points in the story than others. (as cited in Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p. 137)

Meanwhile, Keller-Cohen and Dyer (1997) asserts that people build multiple identities in their narratives and each time someone tells a story, it is likely that they are constructing a new identity in the story as well (as cited in Davids, 2009). Therefore, many academicians use narrative in analysing formation of identities as they believe identities are often constructed and presented in that form. (Davids, 2009).

An example of identity study in the narrative form is done by Davids (2009) where she analysed a personal narrative told by a young man at an orphanage centre in Cape Town, South Africa using discourse analytical approach. In her research, Davids employed mainly Tannen’s (1989, 2008) narrative analysis approach – which distinguishes between three kinds of narratives as well as putting an importance on linguistic elements like dialogue and imagery in creating meanings behind conversations – to examine how the participant construct identities and build evaluation in association to his experiences with family, school and drugs within his

narrative. The findings of the study suggest that the construction of identity of the participant is done by aligning to certain beliefs while rejecting others. There is also an indication of multiple identities in each individual and that the construction as well as representations of identities can differ depending on the context; like who we talk to or who we want to be.

2.3.1 Narrative identity in migrant studies

Within migration studies, work on identities generally raises concerns on the way migrants interpret and discuss different aspects of the displacement process from the country of origin to the host country; the way migrants view themselves as individuals and communities, the identification of group membership and the boundaries that they set in regard to different group belongings (De Fina & Tseng, 2017). They also add that research on identities and representations can be split into three separate sub-areas: (i) research on migrants as language learners, (ii) research on migrants as a particular member of community, and (iii) research on storytelling that focuses on migrants but told by members from external groups.

The first sub-area of narrative migrant studies concerned with migrants' experiences as language learners. Studies of this type explore how migrants demonstrate their ability as language learners, their language learning experience, the relation between that experience to other activities such as work, including its contribution in the construction of identities through narrative. A study done by Haapasaari (2018) addresses these issues. In his research, Haapasaari explore the ways language user and language learner identities are being constructed among three immigrants in Finland using mainly Bamberg's (1997) three levels of positioning as well as some positioning strategies from Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann (2000) on analysing autobiographical research interviews. He also examined how participants react to identity

discourses that are ascribed to them by the Finnish society. The results of the study conclude that by positioning themselves with the characters in the story world, the researcher (within the interactive setting) and master narratives, they performed various identity. Some of the types of identity includes hardworking language learner and competent language user. In certain contexts, they also use those language identities to reject any negative identities ascribed to them and instead, justify their identity as a Finnish immigrant. Overall, the study show how positionings can assist in the construction of identities as well as how a particular constructed identity can use to reject any existing identity and create a new one.

While narrative identity study on migrants can be categorised into certain types, they are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The research done by Dannecker (2005), for example, examines Bangladeshi migrant workers in Malaysia, both as members of the South Asian community and how their identity is being constructed as the ‘Others’ by the multi-ethnic Malaysian society. The collected data consists of narrative interviews with Bangladeshi migrants in Malaysia, representatives of non-governmental organisations, unions and other organisations that are involved in the area of migration. In her study, the Malaysian society which is seemingly open-minded to other cultures due to its multi-ethnic nature, Dannecker found that it is that trait itself that is partly responsible for the construction of ‘Others’ Bangladeshi migrant workers in the country. As a country with multiple ethnic groups where individual identity formation is still strongly tied to ethnicity, deciding on a national identity is always a challenge. In order to find that identity, the Malaysian society makes a distinction of ‘us’ and the ‘others’ in the course of interactions with other people, especially migrant workers. When this distinction results in a biased treatment towards them, the Bangladeshi migrants sometimes justified the treatment by highlighting on their status as a guest in the country. At the same time, the religious connection with Malaysian Muslims is one of the motivations for

the move for some Bangladeshi migrants. Studies like this show how construction of identities help to portray the relationship between migrants and their host country as well as life experiences from the migrants' viewpoints. In the narrative identity study on migrants in Malaysia, this study also holds a high importance as it is one of the very few that has been done and serve as a reference for this proposed study as well as other future ones.

2.4 Summary

Due to its social relevance, migrations and migrants have been a popular subject in many studies across various academic disciplines around the world. For some researchers, the attempt to better understand this phenomenon is by focusing on migrants' experiences through storytelling and narrative. Therefore, over the decades, narrative has played an important role in migration studies as both a genre and a methodological tool.

In Malaysia, the country's dependency on migrant workers makes this issue as an important one that need to be discussed. However, the lack of studies on migrants in the country only serve to debilitate this process. For this reason, this study is proposed in order to make sense of life as experienced by the migrant workers themselves and provide additional knowledge on the community so that more awareness surrounding this subject can be fostered.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This study was carried out by analysing construction of identities and central themes in the autobiographical narratives of migrant workers in Selangor, Malaysia. In order to achieve this, qualitative approaches were used in data collection and data analysis as these methods were suitable to the nature of this study which focused on descriptive interviews and analyses on subjective matters.

3.1 Research Design

The research design of this study involves qualitative research. The nature of this type of research is exploratory, open-ended and focuses on the meanings and descriptions of findings. Thus, De Fina (2003) argues on the usage of qualitative approach in the identity in narrative study as it can provides insightful views on the representation of the self that are not apparent through quantitative methods such as statistics. Meanwhile, the research paradigm of this study is within the landscape of narrative analysis as the collected data is presented in the narrative form. One of the narrative analysis tools, the Positioning Theory was employed in this study. Other qualitative methods used in this research include interviews of participants and thematic analysis in data collection and data analysis. Interview was chosen in the study as it is an effective method in gaining access to stories, which according to De Fina and King (2011), an important site for the construction of identities and the negotiation of local positionings by participants. Meanwhile, thematic analysis was done to identify common themes in the data.

3.2 Selection of Participants

In selecting the participants for the study, the purposive sampling method was used as there were criteria needed to be met by the participants. First and foremost, due to the aim of the study, the participants consisted of only migrant workers that are currently based in Selangor, Malaysia. The state of Selangor was chosen as it hosts the highest number of migrant workers compared to other states in Malaysia according to the Immigration Department of Malaysia. The selection of participants was primarily done in Kajang, a developing town in Selangor with a huge number of migrant workers.

The size of participants is 15 people, which is the minimum number required for the interview data collection technique according to the university's specifications. These participants were made up of 5 Indonesians, 5 Bangladeshis, and 5 Pakistanis. These nationalities are among the top country of origins for migrant workers in Selangor and Malaysia in general (UN International Migration, 2019). Furthermore, participants were of both male and female genders and are working in the services sector. The services sector was chosen for its diverse and high number of migrant workers that are being employed in it.

In order to ensure the quality of the collected data and the fulfilment of the study's objectives, several other factors are taken into consideration. In terms of age, participants were all in their adulthood. Participants also must have lived and worked in Malaysia for at least 1 year and is still living in the country. This is to ensure participants have enough experiences living in Malaysia and an adequate level of competency in Malay - the primary language used during the interviews – if they are not able to communicate using English.

3.3 Instrument

3.3.1 Interview

According to Blundell (2016), narrative data is commonly gained through interviews. Therefore, interviews were done with the participants as a means to gather the necessary data. In order to encourage participants to talk more and allow conversations with the interviewers to be less rigid in the interviews, a semi-structured approach was taken. The approach involved using a set of questions that were prepared beforehand and making up new questions as the interview progresses by the interviewers. In the interviews, participants were asked on four different aspects of their migrant experiences: the motivation and the process involved in the migration, work and living experiences, interaction with Malaysians, and future plans. The interviews were conducted in either colloquial Malay, English or a mixture of both, depending on the participants' language skills. Questions were also phrased according to the participants' level of comprehension in the conducted language. Table 1 shows the pre-prepared set of opening questions used in the interview that were loosely adapted from Blundell (2016).

Table 1

Interview opening questions

NO.	QUESTIONS
A) Motivation and journey to Malaysia	
1	Kamu berasal dari mana?
2	Bila kali pertama kamu datang ke Malaysia?
3	Kenapa kamu datang bekerja di Malaysia?
4	Kenapa Malaysia dan bukannya negara lain?
5	Macam mana kamu datang ke Malaysia? Sendiri atau ada ejen?
B) Daily work and living experiences (in country of origin and Malaysia)	
6	Sebelum ke Malaysia, kamu buat apa di (negara asal)?
7	Sekarang bekerja sebagai apa? Contoh kerja yang kamu buat?
8	Macam mana belajar bahasa Melayu?
9	Selalu balik (negara asal)?
10	Ada keluarga di (negara asal) atau di Malaysia?
11	Ada banyak masalah waktu duduk di sini? Contoh masalah?
12	Biasa buat apa waktu tak bekerja?
C) Interaction with Malaysians	
13	Macam mana cakap dengan orang Malaysia waktu tak pandai cakap bahasa Melayu dulu?
14	Selalu cakap dengan orang Malaysia di waktu luar bekerja?
15	Pernah ada masalah dengan orang Malaysia? Contoh?
16	Orang Malaysia macam mana? Ok?
17	Kamu rasa orang Malaysia layan kamu lain sebab kamu pekerja asing?
D) Feelings and future plans	
18	Macam mana rasanya kerja di sini?
19	Beza bekerja di sini dengan negara lain?
20	Berapa lama lagi nak kerja di sini?

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

3.4.1 Finding participants

As this study deals with narrative data, the primary means in data collection was through interviews with the participants. Therefore, the researcher began the first step in the data collection process by locating suitable migrant workers who are willing to be interviewed. The search began around the end of December 2019 till early January 2020. Potential participants were mainly found by contacting informal networks of friends and acquaintances. This method was chosen after taken into consideration on the time restraint issue that the researcher had as well as the issue of trust on the migrant workers' part. The researcher also attempted to find potential participants by approaching strangers in public areas of Kajang. However, with much of the attempts turned out to be a failure, it was clear that a lot of migrant workers would not be willing to talk about themselves to a stranger without some sort of referral.

All the 15 participants were eventually found. As most of the participants have a busy schedule, they had the liberty to decide on the time, date and location at which the interview was to be held. Unlike a few other studies with a similar nature, the researcher did not do any preliminary meetings ahead of the interviews as a result of the time constraint. Furthermore, most of the participants did not have a day-off so interviews were mainly done straightaway on their lunch hour or a spare time during the working hours. The interviews were done between 22nd and 30th January of 2020 and were primarily held in different locations around Kajang.

At the beginning of the interview, participants given a brief oral explanations of the study and that the interview will be recorded. In addition, they were assured on the confidentiality of their identity and that any information that arises from the interview would only be used for the purposes of the study. A consent form (refer to Appendix 1) was given to them which stated

that they could withdraw from the research at any time, including asking for the recordings to be erased. Once all the interviews were done, the audio recordings of the interviews were then transcribed. The transcriptions were later analysed using the chosen theoretical framework.



Figure 1. Data collection procedures

3.4.2 Transcription conventions

Following the nature of this research, there is a need of written narrative data to assist in the data analysis process. Therefore, the conducted interviews were recorded. The audio recordings of the interviews were then transcribed and turned into rough transcriptions. The transcription conventions used were primarily made up of a mixture of Atkinson and Heritage (1986)'s and Langford (1994)'s with a slight modification done on some of the transcription symbols in terms of its definitions. A complete list of transcription symbols used in this study can be found in Appendix 2.

3.5 Data Analysis Procedures

3.5.1 Narrative Analysis

In narrative studies across various fields, the positioning theory is often used as both a theoretical framework and an analytical tool (Blundell, 2016). Through positioning analysis, identity can be studied not as something that we have, but rather, as something that we are

constantly constructing (Bamberg, 1997). Following these ideas, the collected narrative data were analysed using a popular positioning strategy, which is the Bamberg's Positioning Theory (1997) in order to achieve the first objective of the study. According to this theory, in the study of narrative identity, Bamberg suggests examining narrative through three levels of positioning:

1. How are the characters positioned in relation to one another within the reported events?
2. How does the speaker position him or herself to the audience?
3. How do narrators position themselves to themselves?

(Bamberg, 1997, p. 337)

The first question explores the kinds of encounters that exist between characters within the story world of the narrative. Bamberg also emphasise on how characters are being depicted under this question (Bamberg, 2004). Meanwhile, the second question refers to how the narrator addresses the audience or listener through linguistic means. Later on, however, Bamberg improved the question by stating that it focuses on "the interactive work that is being accomplished between participants in the interactive setting" (2004, p. 336). In the interview setting, this refers to the narrator and the interviewer. The third question addresses how the narrator position themselves with regard to broader discourse or master narratives.

For this research, the researcher first began analysing the interview transcriptions one by one. In each transcription, story events and interactions between the narrator (the participant) and other characters in the narrative data was scrutinised for positionings according to the three levels of positioning in Bamberg's theory. Positionings can be seen from how the narrator position themselves to other characters (Level 1), to the audience, who in this case, refers to the

interviewer (Level 2) as well as to wider discourse (Level 3) in their narrative. The wider discourses or master narratives were determined by looking through the entire data as a whole and in an immersive manner. Field notes and impression on the participants were also taken into consideration. Apart from that, the researcher also took note on any references that were made by the narrator in regard to social categories such as age, nationality and occupation as those could indicate of a positioning activity. By looking at how the narrator places themselves in social interactions through positioning, the construction and management of identities can be determined.

3.5.2 Thematic Analysis

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a way to identify, examine and describe patterns or themes in data. Therefore, thematic analysis was used on the narrative data in order to fulfil the second objective of the study. In addition, the analysis involved doing a coding process on the interview transcriptions. Coding is a system that is done to label and organise qualitative data so that the data become more quantifiable and easier to handle. It is especially useful in studies that utilised thematic analysis. Coding involves generating ‘codes’, which is “a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (Saldana, 2009, p. 3).

In this research, the overall process of the thematic analysis was guided by the Braun and Clarke’s Six Phases of Thematic Analysis (2006) model. Meanwhile, the codes that were generated through the coding process were arranged and presented using a slightly modified

version of a coding model taken from Saldana (2009). The coding model helped to determine the themes found in the narrative in a systemic manner.

Following the chosen models, the researcher first made sure to familiarise themselves with the data. The second phase involved generating initial codes from the data. This was done by analysing interview transcription and assigning a code to any recurrent, interesting and meaningful features or raw information found in the narrative. After the initial codes had been collated, the researcher examined the codes, considered how different codes can be merged to create an overarching theme and sorted these codes into category and themes in the third phase. This phase also included a lot of codifying process where assigned codes were refined by recoding and recategorising. It is uncommon to get coding right on the first try. In the fourth phase, the initial generated category and themes were later reviewed and refined in the fourth phase by rework certain themes or discard unsuitable ones from the analysis. In the fifth phase, the researcher starts defining and naming the categories and themes, including arranging them according to the chosen coding model. Meanwhile, in the last phase, the researcher began doing a write-up regarding the fully worked-out themes and the validity of the analysis. The result of the analysis will show the central themes found in the narratives.

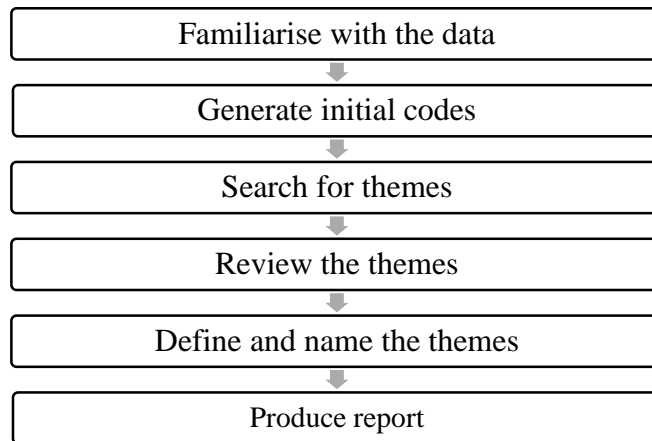


Figure 2. Steps in Braun & Clarke's 6-Phases of Thematic Analysis (2006)

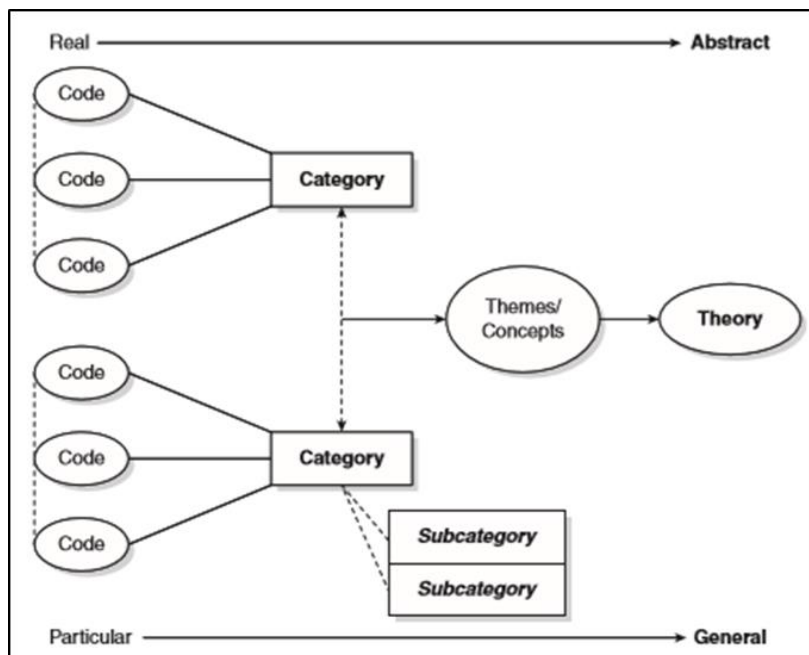


Figure 3. Coding model from Saldana (2009)

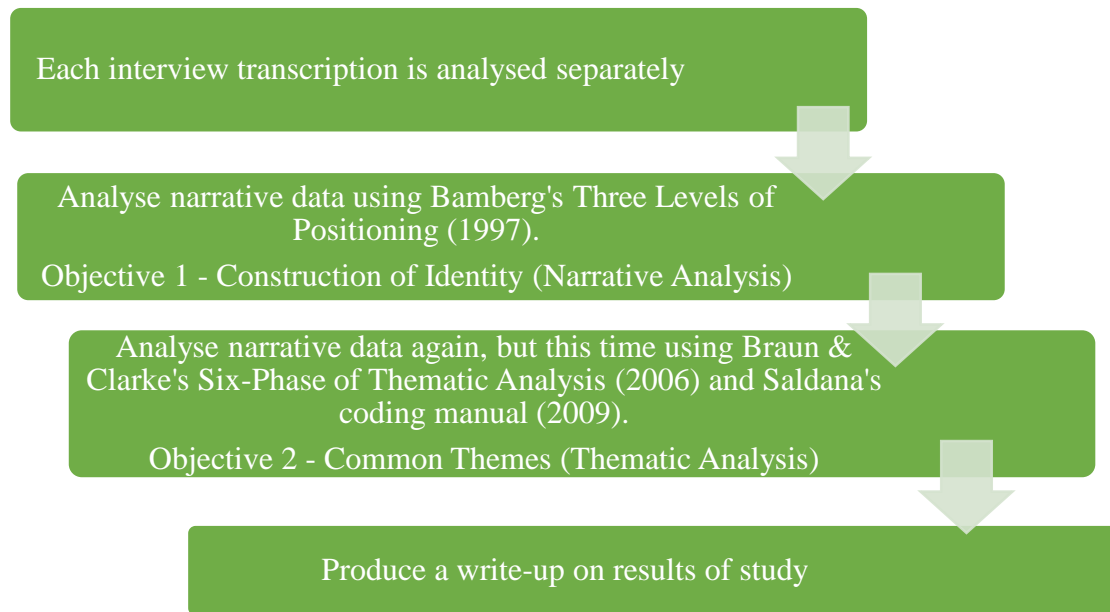


Figure 3. Overall data analysis procedures

3.6 Reliability and Validity of the Study

In order to achieve an accurate level of reliability and validity in the study, the methodology used had been carefully researched and selected by the researcher. This was done to make sure that this study is able to become a justifiable and legitimate source of discovery in the field of narrative study on migrant workers in Malaysia.

In regards to data collection, the researcher had taken ethical considerations into account. Participants were given an oral briefing on the nature of the study and were asked on their permissions for the interviews to be recorded. Apart from an oral assurance on the confidentiality of their identity and the handling of the received information, they were also given a consent form. The form stated that they were allowed to withdraw their participation at any point of the research and asked for the recording to be erased. The researcher also assigned a generic label to each of the participants in the write-up as to keep their real identities anonymous. The decision to use labels, instead of pseudonyms, was made after taking the

number of participants into account. Narrative identity studies tend to focus on a very small selection of participants in a highly immersive manner. Therefore, the amount of participants that is as much as the one in this research is slightly unusual for a study of this nature. With that being said, in order to avoid any confusion for both the researcher and the readers, labels were used as too many pseudonyms would complicate the analysis process as well as the reading.

As far as analytical tools and theoretical frameworks are concerned, those methods were chosen after a thorough research on other studies in the field of narrative identity were done. Positioning and Bamberg's theory has been frequently used as an analytical tool and framework in many narrative identity research, be it on migrants or non-migrants. Some of the studies done that employed this method includes Archakis and Tzanne (2005); Blix, Hamran, and Normann (2015); Blundell (2016), Haapasaari (2018) and Podboj (2019). This has contributed to the idea of positioning being a suitable method to be utilised as part of the methodology of the study.

3.7 Limitations of the Study

While the research was carried out, several limitations arose. These limitations need to be addressed so that improvements can be done and better, more encapsulating future studies are produced.

One of the biggest limitation that occurred during the study was related to time. Studies of this nature are normally conducted within an extensive time frame in order to produce comprehensive findings. As it deals with subjective analyses and interpretations, researchers typically take their time to know research participants and their circumstances in order to have a better understanding and lessen any unconscious biasness that may occur in their findings. In the case of this study, time restraint is an issue for both the researcher and the migrant workers.

The researcher had little time to conduct data collection while the participants mostly have long working hours and had very little spare time to fix more than one appointment. Therefore, in most of the meetings, the researcher and the participant were meeting for the first time. Interviews were started right away and the researcher had to make full use of the little time that was available to build an impression and get to know the participants.

Another limitation involves the mix nature of the study. This research's combination of narrative identity analysis and thematic analysis resulted in a few issues. One of issue is with the regard of the number of participants. Narrative identity studies typically focus on studying a very small selection of participants in a highly immersive and exploratory manner. Thematic analysis, on the other hand, could use a larger corpus of data as it involves finding patterns and central themes in order to paint a bigger picture on a certain issue. Therefore, due to the mix nature of this study, trying to decide on a suitable number of research participants needed has been a slightly confusing for the researcher.

Language barrier is also one of the limitations in the study. The lack of mastery in the Malay language for some of the participants could mean that the narrative data would have turned out differently, had they been fluent in the language. There are many things that could have been said in the interview and this is evident from the difference in the amount of narrative data among Indonesians and non-Indonesians. Descriptions were ampler and more vivid in the narratives told by Indonesians participants as compared to participants of other nationalities whose first languages are not related to the Malay language. The lack of competency in Malay had also resulted in a miscommunication issue between the researcher and the participants at some point during the interview.

Other limitation includes the background of participants. In this study, participants come from either Indonesia, Pakistan and Bangladesh. All of them are adult, Muslims and work in the services sector. Therefore, migrant workers of other backgrounds are not being represented in this research.

3.8 Summary

This study used qualitative approaches as a methodological tool. These approaches comprised of interviews as an instrument for data collection as well as narrative analysis and thematic analysis for data analysis. The collected data was first analysed using narrative analysis in order to fulfil the first objective of study. Once all the transcriptions had been analysed, they were examined again for a second time using the thematic analysis so that the second objective of the study can be achieved. Overall, these methods were chosen as they fit the nature of the study and are commonly employed in other narrative studies of migration.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

The main objectives of this study is to explore the construction of identities and common themes found in the narratives of migrant workers. As described in the methodology section, the data for this research were gathered by interviewing 15 migrant workers and transcribing the audio recordings of the interviews. Aligning with the number of participants, there is a total of 15 transcripts and the number of pages for each transcript ranges from 5 to 10 pages. All of the transcripts were then analysed using Bamberg's Positioning Theory (1997) and thematic analysis respectively.

Bamberg's Positioning Theory was utilised as both an analytical tool and theoretical framework to explore how identities are being constructed in migrant narratives by analysing positioning activities and the strategies that were employed during the process. Through the theory, the narratives were examined through 3 different levels of positioning. In level 1 positioning, the narrator was looked into how they position themselves to other characters in the story world. This is also known as local positioning. Meanwhile, level 2 positioning reveals how the narrator positioning themselves in an interactive setting, which is between the narrator and the interviewer. Level 3 positioning, on the hand, the narrator is shown to be positioning themselves against wider social discourses. The social discourses that are mentioned here refers to the dominant discourse or master narratives that are found exist within the obtained narrative data. This can also be referred to as societal positioning.

On the other hand, thematic analysis was done to identify patterns in data and determine the central themes that can be found in migrant narratives. The study used Braun and Clarke's Six-Phases Thematic Analysis (2006) model as an overall guide for the analysis. In the analysis,

interview transcriptions first underwent a coding process. Elements in the narrative data were assigned meaningful codes. The codes were then arranged and grouped to form categories. While categories were grouped to form themes. This particular presentation of codes was taken from a slightly modified version of a coding model proposed by Saldana (2009).

This chapter presents the findings of the study that were gathered through the methodology mentioned above. It also discusses in detail how the findings work to fulfil the objective of the research.

4.1 Demographic Information

A total of 15 migrant workers were interviewed during the process of data collection. There was an equal amount of five workers coming from either one of these three countries: Indonesia, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. They were all of varying ages in the adult category. Seven of the workers were young adults (ages 20-35), another seven were middle-age adults (ages 35-55) and there was only one older adult (aged older than 55). They are also working in various professions under the services sector at the time that they were being interviewed. Despite the variety of professions, the migrant workers had one thing in common, which was that they were not required of any prior academic qualifications in order to obtain those jobs. Apart from that, there were eleven male and four female migrant workers in the study. The unequal amount of male and female participants was due to the fact that female migrant workers – especially non-Indonesians - were harder to find as in Malaysia, their overall number is significantly lower than their male counterpart (UN International Migration, 2019).

Table 2

Demographic information of participants

Participants (label)	Country of origin	Age	Gender	Profession (at the time of interview)
P1	Bangladesh	24	Male	Furniture shop worker
P2	Bangladesh	26	Male	Furniture shop worker
P3	Pakistan	27	Male	Security guard
P4	Pakistan	22	Male	Security guard
P5	Indonesia	50	Female	Domestic worker
P6	Indonesia	68	Female	Domestic worker
P7	Indonesia	40	Female	Canteen worker
P8	Indonesia	37	Female	Cleaner
P9	Indonesia	52	Male	Contractor
P10	Bangladesh	30	Male	Golf's club general worker
P11	Bangladesh	37	Male	Golf's club general worker
P12	Bangladesh	26	Male	Golf's club general worker
P13	Pakistan	30	Male	Mamak shop worker
P14	Pakistan	43	Male	Businessman
P15	Pakistan	38	Male	Sales assistant

4.2 Construction of Identity

This study employed Bamberg's Positioning Theory (1997) in conducting a narrative analysis on the collected data. This section presents the findings of the analysis by elaborating on the level of positioning that occurred in the narratives, the discursive strategies and linguistic devices that were employed by participants during the process. The elaborations are further illustrated with examples from the collected data.

From the analysis that was done, it appears that participants employed certain discursive strategies and linguistic devices as a narrator during a positioning activity which in turn, led to an identity being constructed in their narratives. Discursive strategies of positioning refer to the use of linguistic devices as a means to position the narrator and other social actors on various levels of narrative context (Bamberg, 1997). In the data that were analysed, there were four types of discursive strategies that the participants were found to be using in their narratives which were direct positioning, (de)agentivisation, involvement and collectivisation.

4.2.1 Direct positioning

Direct positioning is the commonly used discursive strategy by participants as a narrator in their narratives. Through this strategy, the narrator uses a level 1 positioning where they position themselves to another social actor or character in the story world. This strategy also involves agency. In narrative research, agency is defined as "the degree of activity and initiative that narrators attribute to themselves as characters in particular story worlds" (De Fina, 2003, p. 93). In the collected data, participants mainly use direct positioning to construct a positive identity of themselves. The social actor was there as a way to justify or reinforce that particular identity.

Saya selalu fikir itu macam mana nak treat customer. Saya selalu fikir itu macam. Kalau saya pun baik sama orang, dia pun baik sama saya. Kalau saya cakap sama dia, dia marah pun saya takda cakap sama dia. Saya cari duit lain. (P2, Bangladesh)

An example of direct positioning can be seen from the quotation above. In this example, P2 uses a level 1 positioning where he positions himself to an imagined social actor. The social actor is said to be imagined since the word ‘dia’ in that narrative is not referring to anyone that P2 has mentioned before in particular. Prior to this paragraph, the interviewer had asked P2 to recall either a good or bad experience that he have had while living in Malaysia. P2 proceeded to say that he have not had any bad experience and mentioned the following paragraph. By saying this, P2 is constructing himself as someone of a good faith. He does not want to look for any trouble. As a migrant worker, his priority is on his work and how to make it better.

Dia pun tahu kan. Itu dia pun kesian, orang dah masuk sini cari makan. Sini kita pergi, kita mau buat (kerja). Orang lain lah. Kita mau cari makan halal. (P3, Pakistan)

The second example of direct positioning is similar to the first one. It is also a level 1 positioning where the narrator positioned himself with another social actor in the story. However, there are slight differences between this example and the first one. The first one being the fact that the word ‘dia’ actually has a reference in this narrative. P3 was asked if Malaysians have been treating him well throughout his stay in the country. He proceeded to answer that while not every local had been kind to him, everyone that lives in the neighbourhood that he is currently working at, however, has been treating him well. Through this statement, it can be inferred that ‘dia’ here refers to the people in the neighbourhood. Another difference in this example lies in the agency within and how it helps with identity construction. In the paragraph, P3 said that the people in the neighbourhood has been treating him well because they are aware of his status as a migrant worker. By positioning himself to the people in the neighbourhood

and giving them a higher agency with him having the lesser agency, P3 is justifying his migrant status and that he is only here to ensure a livelihood.

When initiating a direct positioning, participants do not simply pick any social actor to be positioned with. Sometimes, the social actor is an authority figure in real life. A positioning with an authority figure would help to strengthen a particular statement that was made by the narrator.

Saya duduk TKP dulu, bukan apa, ramai..saya tiap malam tu lepak, dengan geng polis. Dah 20 tahun. Kenal dia, sampai sekarang tak ada problem apa, tak ada masalah. Ramai geng polis. (P9, Indonesia)

Excerpt 5. Positioning in narrative (P6)

The example above shows a direct positioning to an authority of figure. The level of positioning involved was a level 1 positioning. In the interview, P9 was asked on his interaction with Malaysians and the following paragraph shows his answer to the question. By positioning himself to policemen, he is elevating his status as a migrant worker. He is not interacting with just any Malaysians, he is interacting with *the* Malaysian policemen. It also helps to build his identity as a friendly person by collocating the word ‘lepak’ and ‘geng polis’ and the fact that he had never run into any trouble with those policemen makes he seems harmless, even.

Jadi, saya pertama first (dibagi) tu, terkejut, “Dah kenapa banyak, terlebih ke?”, saya cakap. Saya bagi balik. “Tak, tak. Memang saya bagi you sehari begini kerana you boleh () banyak benda yang you pegang”. Misalnya, bos cakap, “Sepatutnya saya ambil pekerja 6 orang tapi kerana you boleh pegang, jadi you boleh dua orang, you boleh pegang seorang.” Macam tu. Jadi, “So, () yang lebih lah. Kerana you boleh pegang”. (P7, Indonesia)

Above shows a second example on direct positioning to an authority figure. In the paragraph, P7 uses a level 1 positioning when she positions herself to her Malaysian employer, an authority figure. This strategy is further aided with the use of constructed dialogue as a

linguistic device by P7 when she re-enacts the conversation that she had with her employer. Prior to this story, P7 has given many instances where she is seen as capable and independent using similar contexts. In this particular narrative, the employer mentions raising P7's wage after seeing her being hardworking. The positioning is done to legitimise and further strengthen P7's identity as a capable woman. According to Tannen (2007), constructed dialogue is a linguistic device that is commonly used in constructing certain agency. In the story, the employer is given the agentive role with P8 being less agentive. This can be seen by how the employer's dialogue being much longer than of P7. The assignment of agency is important as a way to highlight the degree of authority on a social actor.

4.2.1 (De)agentivisation

Another discursive strategy that was seen employed in narratives is agentivisation. This strategy involves the assignment of agency on social actors. When a social actor is given an agentive role, it is called agentivisation but de-agentivisation occurs when they become less agentive. In the collected data, the identities of the social actors are constantly negotiated through this strategy. Agentivisation and de-agentivisation happened in a successive manner where the narrator began as less agentive but became more agentive as the narrative progresses.

An example of agentivisation occurs during a particular event that was told by P6 in her narrative. In that event, the main social actors are P6 - as the narrator-, along with her employer's wife whom she calls 'Madam' and did not have a very good relationship with. In the entire part of the narrative, P6 uses a level 1 positioning where she positions herself with other social actors in the story world.

Vakum tu, dia tak mahu siapa-siapa buat, tak mahu siapa-siapa. Dia nak vakum. Vakum memang pakai air kan berat. Jadi tu, jam lima saya vakum semua, lepas tu saya mop. Selagi belum apa, memang tak boleh—dia..—Selepas di mop pun baru dia turun dari at—bawah. Macam gini.

At the beginning of the narrative, P6 talks in detail about the tasks that the Madam has given her. She did everything and even woke up early to do them. She is the hard-working housemaid. In this identity construction, she holds the agentive role

((in a slightly exasperating tone)) Saya hari-hari gaduh. (Madam) tu. Saya bukannya duduk senang-senang. Bukan enam orang makan () empat ketul kan. Lepas tu, saya kerja—dia tahu memang saya..memang saya rajin, dia tahu. Tapi ada je tak kena. Memang hujung-hujungnya..—rasanya dia tu cemburu lah. Tapi saya tanya dengan bibik belakang, yang tu katanya dah lima pembantu lari. Kata gitu. “Oh, patutlah macam ni”, saya cakap macam tu. (P6, Indonesia)

P6 continues to build on her hard-working identity by using the phrase ‘duduk senang-senang’. She has also indirectly used the adjective ‘rajin’ to describe herself. However, even with everything that she has done, the Madam is not happy with her. In order to maintain her identity and remain agentive, she starts constructing a new identity by assigning an attribute to the other social actor. She describes the Madam with the adjective, ‘cemburu’. Now, the identities have shifted. By positioning herself as being on the receiving end of the Madam’s jealousy, she has constructed a new identity where she is the ‘bullied housemaid’ with the Madam being the ‘jealous mistress’. P6 further reinforced those identities by including a constructed dialogue of a conversation that she have had with another fellow housemaid.

Dia cakap sama anaknya, kata saya tak buat kerja lain. Sakit kaki lah kata. Macam tu. Maknya cakap macam tu. Saya cakap, “Makcik ni naik haji. Kenapa cakap macam tu?”, saya cakap macam tu. Lepas tu, “Awak ni, solat tipu”, katanya. Macam tu. Lepas tu, “Makcik lah tipu naik haji!”, saya cakap macam tu. (P8, Indonesia)

This is another example of agentivisation that was collected from the data. In the narrative above, P8 recount an encounter with one of her past employers using constructed

dialogue. A level 1 positioning is employed between P8 and her employer. At the beginning of the narrative, the employer claims that P8 avoid doing all the housework by lying about being sick and doing prayers. As a result, P8 is given the identity of a liar and lazy housemaid. In this construction of identity, the employer holds the agentive role. P8 rejects the ascribed identity by fighting back and claims that it is the employer that lies. By saying that, P8 is attempting to turn the tables and constructs the employer as a liar which in turn, will results in a change on her own identity. Through the change, she will be instead, known as the victim who are being currently being accused. The agentive role has been changed to P8.

4.2.3 Involvement

Participants also employed a discursive strategy called involvement in their narratives. In this strategy, as a narrator, participants positioned themselves as close to the interviewer and involve the interviewer in the narrative. As a result, this strategy almost always uses a level 2 positioning where the narrator positions themselves in the interactive setting, which is with the interviewer. In the collected data, the involvement strategy that was employed by participants have an evaluative nature.

Tapi kalau saya dah biasa mana-mana, tak ada masalah. Kerana saya fikir semua pekerjaan pun, kita kena pelajari. Kerana itu, seperti ilmu kita nanti kan. Seandainya kita ada lah rezeki nak () ka, nak buat apa ka, kita udah pengalaman dari bawah. Kerana kalau kita nak sukses, kita tak boleh malu belajar apa pun. Saya pikirnya macam tu, puan, kita tua, boleh umur tapi pengalaman, kita tak boleh buat () dicari-cari. (P7, Indonesia)

The paragraph above shows an example of involvement being used in narrative. In the paragraph, P7 evaluates on the working life. Level 2 positioning is employed by including the interviewer her narrative. The evidence for the employment of the involvement strategy can be

seen from the inclusive language that are being used by the narrator. In the evaluation, the first person inclusive plural pronoun, 'kita' is used by P7 as a linguistic device. The word 'kita' also have a referential usage which includes the interviewer as an interlocutor to understand and agree with what was being said. Throughout her interview, P7 has shown herself as a capable woman in many instances. She has work in many countries and gained a lot of work experience. This positioning helps to further strengthen her identity as an experienced and capable person.

4.2.4 Collectivisation

The last discursive strategy used in narrative is collectivisation. Through this strategy, participants constructed identity in a collective manner. From the analysis that was done, narratives that utilised this strategy employed the level 3 positioning with the narrator positions themselves with the master narratives. These master narratives were taken from the context of the entire collected narrative data.

Dia tu, bukan masalah India. Itu masalah kita. Kita habis kerja pukul lima, tak payah lah jalan malam-malam aja. Lu ada kereta kan motor ka, boleh lah. Kita orang lain negara, tak boleh jalan malam-malam aja. Semua negara sama. Kita negara pun, dia malam-malam jalan pun, kitaorang pun dia lagi kacau. (P10, Bangladesh)

The paragraph above employs a mixture of involvement and collectivisation strategies. Involvement is said to be used due to the nature of the personal pronouns that are utilised in the narrative. In the paragraph, P10 uses the word 'lu', which is a Malay slang for the personal pronoun 'you'. Based on the rest of the paragraph, it can be presumed that when P10 uses that word, he is actually referring to migrant workers in a general manner. However, throughout the interview, the only interaction that is happening is between the participant and the interviewer. By taking that fact into account, the word 'lu' here can be said to have an attributive usage.

Which means it can be applied to anyone who fits the context in which the word is being used, instead of referring to a specific person. Since the interviewer is the only interlocutor in the interview, they are included in the narrative as a social actor. By positioning himself to the interviewer, P10 further reinforce his identity as the ‘Others’ that he had constructed through collectivisation.

In terms of collectivisation, the usage of the strategy in the narrative is aided with the choice of pronoun that is used. Prior to the paragraph, P10 has admitted that he had experienced harassment from a few Malaysians before. Instead of putting the blame on the harasser, P10 evaluates on the reason for the harassment and a way to avoid the issue. P10’s usage of the first person inclusive plural pronoun, ‘kita’ in the narrative reveals a collective nature. The word is presumed to refer to either Bangladeshis or migrant workers in general. In the collected data, a particular topic that is often discussed by the participants is their identification as a migrant worker or as someone who is foreign to the country. As a result, identifying oneself as a foreigner has become one of the dominant discourse that arises across the narrative data. In the paragraph given, P10 draws on that wider discourse to conduct a level 3 positioning. By positioning to that discourse, he has constructed an identity as the ‘Others’ not just for himself, but for the other migrants during the evaluation.

They’re hardworking. They..they can do any..any kind of job. Pakistanis, especially. They can do any kind of business because they want earn more, more..they have a big family. Not like in Malaysia. Everybody have a five, six () in the world but big issue in Pakistan..and India also, one person is working and everybody is makan, rumah je. Here, everybody doing work. Even, er, perempuan ke lelaki ke, dia ().
(P14, Pakistan)

The paragraph above shows another example of collectivisation in narrative. In the narrative, P14 uses the third person plural pronoun, ‘they’ to talk about Pakistanis in a collective manner. Another dominant discourse that is apparent across the narrative data is on financial

security being the main motivation for the migration. For all of the participants, money is either the sole or a part of the motivation for their migration to Malaysia. By positioning to that wider social discourse, P14 uses a level 3 positioning to construct a hard-working and family-oriented identity to the Pakistanis. Pakistanis are willing to do any type of jobs if it means they can secure a livelihood for their family. Since P14 is also a Pakistani, those identities also apply to him.

4.3 Common themes

This study employed Braun and Clarke's Six-Phases of Thematic Analysis (2006) and a slightly modified version of a coding model by Saldana (2009) as guidelines to conduct thematic analysis. This section reports on findings of the analysis by elaborating on the common themes and categories found in the narratives. The elaborations are further illustrated by examples from the data.

Three overarching themes were identified in the analysis: motivation for the migration, identity as a migrant worker, life as a migrant worker.

Table 3

Common themes and categories found in narratives

Theme	Context	Category	Code
Motivation for the migration	Economic Conditions	Monetary value	Differences in currency value
		Job opportunities	Low job options Short-term employment Low salary jobs Policies in country of origin
	Family Issues	Family influences	Family connection Family members who are also migrant workers
		Family obligations Marital problem	Obligation as breadwinner Being a divorcee
	Self-interest	Self-advancement	Self-improvement Gain an experience
Identity as a migrant worker	Cultural Values	Cultural differences Cultural similarities	Gender roles differentiation Shared culture
	Legal Status	Visa obtainment	Cheated by agent Inefficient system
	Relationships	Treatment by locals	Harassed by locals
Life as a migrant worker	Language Skills	Language barriers	Language differences English as lingua franca
	Working Conditions	Treatment by employer Work experience	Negative treatment from employer Part-time jobs
	Living Conditions	Lifestyle	Frugality

4.3.1 Motivation for the migration

This theme is split into different categories which are monetary value, job opportunities, family influences, family obligations, marital problem, self-advancement, cultural differences and cultural similarities. For the participants, the motivation for the migration revolved around four contexts: economic conditions, family, self, and culture.

Monetary value

The motivations of the migration for most participants have revolved around financial security. This desire originated from the difference in currency value that exist between the currencies used in the host country and the country of origin.

My economy is going down right now so, one ringgit in my country is ().38. Supposed, 38 rupees. So if I earn money 1000 so my country, 38,000. (P14, Pakistan)

Job opportunities

For some of the migrant workers, the lack of job opportunities in countries of origin had driven them to find work in Malaysia, which according to them, have a bigger pool of employment options.

One of the reason for the lack of job opportunities is overpopulation. All the participants came from a densely populated nation. The high number of population means that people in the nation have to compete to get a proper job. Employment is either sparse,

Dua ribu lebih, itu sana bina, kampung punya saya bina, 40 ribu. Kalau sana bina, siapa-siapa pun bagi 30 ribu ini kerja, saya macam punya kerja, saya kerja sana. Tapi sana punya, ini tak boleh dapat. Pasal sana, ramai orang. Kerja tak da kosong. (P2, Bangladesh)

Or short-term.

Sana susah. Semua orang mau kerja juga. Siapa mau ambil? Saya orang ambil pun, satu hari tolong saja. Besok tak ada. Sikit orang saja, besok ada. Pakai orang. (P12, Bangladesh)

Sometimes, the issue is not on finding a job, but how much it actually pays. Some of the participants did not have an issue in finding a job, however, the low salary or wage of the job resulted in them having to live pay cheque to pay cheque.

Because I handle, in Pakistan, to very,very big project. One of the cricket stadium. That time, I was assistant of my boss. And I handle all projects... Salary is very few. That time, on 2013, I have, uh, 20 thousand Pakistan rupee. Same like 7, 7 hundred ringgit. Here, I am working with hotel. But I'm getting 1800. (P13, Pakistan)

Masalahnya, di Indonesia tu, kerja banyak tapi gaji tak cukup untuk makan. Bekerja satu hari untuk makan dua hari. Jadi duit simpan tu tak ada. (P9, Indonesia)

Apart from overpopulation, the lack of employment options is also due to certain policies in the country of origin.

Sini, kalau 7 Eleven, diorang dua syif atau tiga syif kerja. Ada satu lagi orang, 6 jam dia kerja, dia dapat duit. Tapi sana, ini macam punya sistem tak da. Kalau itu macam sistem ada, betul itu, Bangladesh punya orang, dia tak da pergi lain-lain punya negeri. Itu macam sistem tak ada. (P2, Bangladesh)

In Kashmir, it's occupied. It is an occupied area. There's no (have) international factories, companies, even have no international bank, branches. Even have no KFC. Anything international level cannot open there. There's no have opportunity for jobs. (P13, Pakistan)

Family influences

Family played a huge role in the decision to work in Malaysia. Some of the participants chose Malaysia specifically to work at, due to family connections or influences. They were either encouraged to migrate by a family member or chose Malaysia due to family members who are already living here which made entry to the country and visa obtainment easier.

Itu pakcik-pakcik kan semua ada sini kan. Dia pun ada (). Dia pakai IC sini. Dah 50 tahun, 60 tahun macam tu lah. (P3, Pakistan)

Saudara saya. Saudara sepupu. Dia yang itu ajak. Dia kan sini udah dapat 13 tahun. (P8, Indonesia)

Original Pakistan tapi sudah lama (). Ada Singapore, Malaysia ada. Sama-sama kan. Sudah lama tinggal sini lah. Yang nenek saya, nenek punya nenek pun dari sini. (P14, Pakistan)

Family obligations

For some of the participants, the migration is a decision that had to be made due to family obligations. The obligation involved having a role as the family's breadwinner in countries in origins. This obligation also stemmed from having a responsibility as a particular member of the family such as the head of family or a single parent.

Jaga itu semua family, itu seorang. Ni saya kerja semua seseorang, makan semua family lah. Adik, abang mak bapa. (P3, Pakistan)

Memang tujuan yang pastinya untuk bekerja, cari makan untuk anak dan isteri. (P9, Indonesia)

Kerana diajak family saya kat situ. Untuk masa depan anak saya lah. (P8, Indonesia)

Marital problems

All of the female participants were divorced with only one that has remarried. Marital issue has resulted the participants to come to Malaysia either as a way to take a break from the problem or because they have a responsibility to provide for their children as a single parent.

Lari daripada dia. Maksudnya, saya tak nak..tak nak kembali lagi (selepas) tu. Macam melarikan perasaan lah. Menghilangkan..macam mana ya... Macam tu lah. (P7, Indonesia)

Saya pun mau mengahwinkan anak, tak ada duit kan. Suami kan tak ada. Suami tak bertanggungjawab kan. (P6, Indonesia)

Self-advancement

Unlike others, some participants do not have any specific urgency to work in Malaysia. While it also involved money as part of the reason, the participants are mainly here for a new experience or self-improvement.

Bila saya itu study jalan, bila saya punya uncle itu ada, Malaysia duduk, dia cakap, "Sekarang kalau mau datang Malaysia, bolehlah 2 ka 3 tahun duduk, boleh pandai, boleh cakap bahasa Melayu. Lepas tu, kerja pun senang, duit pun dapat". (P1, Bangladesh)

Di sana, aiyo, sudah umur 30 lebih pun, tak da kerja. Bapa punya duit ada, tidur, makan. Tapi bapa macam mana cari duit, itu diorang tak da fikir. Dulu, pun betul kan. Saya pun, duit, duit. Legally, saya minta, "ma, duit", "ma, bagi duit". Lepas tu, saya curi dia punya duit. Betul. Tapi sekarang, saya fikir itu cari duit, senang ke tak senang. (P2, Bangladesh)

Kalau itu ikut pengalaman lah, nak kerja..apa, luar..apa, luar negeri. Nak kaut duit lebih lah. Nak kaut pengalaman, duit lebih, macam tu. (P5, Indonesia)

Cultural values

Cultural values also played a part in spurring the decision to work in Malaysia for some of the participants. In Bangladesh and Pakistan, due to different gender roles, women typically stay at home and is not even allowed to work, in some cases. As a result, the responsibility to provide for the family either falls on the father or the son. Families also usually have only one breadwinner.

Susah macam kita sana, kalau lah itu satu..satu orang ada kerja, semua orang dah makan lah. Lain orang tak mau kerja. Satu orang ja kerja. Itu susah. (P3, Pakistan)

In Pakistan, they..one person is doing the job so everybody makan, duduk rumah je. Not allowed to work for perempuan lah. So that's why there's a big difference in economy. (P14, Pakistan)

However, in the case on Indonesian migrant workers. The similarities in the cultural values between Indonesians and Malaysians served as a motivation for the migration.

Oh, sebab Malaysia kan bahasanya senang faham. Jadi, macam sama lah, budaya Indonesia dengan Malaysia. Bahasanya macam sama jadi mudah faham. (P5, Indonesia)

Yang saya senang kat sini kerana satu rumpun. Ah, macam mana ya, macam kita di kampung sendiri. Lepas tu, makanan..dari segi makanan, kurang lebih sama. Cara bercakap. Lepas tu, lebih selesa ramai kawan. (P7, Indonesia)

4.3.2 Identity as a migrant worker

This theme is split into two categories: legal status and relationships.

Legal status

For many migrant workers, visa obtainment was made difficult by issues like being cheated by agent and complex visa obtainment procedures. As a result, some participants want a reformation on the handling of migrant visa by the Malaysia government.

Dah ada kena kencing pun sekali. Buat permit. Bagi duit tapi kerja tak siap. Masalahnya ejen ni, yang tak betul..dia ambil duit..duit tu tak tahu lah pakai apa—dia guna dulu. Lepas tu, nak masuk dekat dalam (kedai) tak ada dah. Dah tak jumpa. Habis. (P9, Indonesia).

Banyak kali sudah rugi tau. Ejen, uh, ambil duit, sudah lari. Banyak kali. (P14, Pakistan)

System is ok but I think, uh, there should be some reforms. Like..like, we should be direct. Like MyEG (), MyEG is the government office. The process should be like this, I want to renew my visa, I got to MyEG, I pay four thousand ringgit, I give my passport, they give me time of one month, after one month later, I go there, they gave back my passport. (). I pay, (). (P15, Pakistan)

And one another thing, I am thinking...the Malaysia..I, I see that another—my, uh, another friend living in another country..Qatar, Kuwait..that Malaysia visa system is very difficult. They, uh, they're not providing direct facilities to, um, to any person. They involve third party same like..agent. If the visa process two thousand..agent charge four thousand same like this. This is a very—another all country not () same like this. (P13, Pakistan)

Relationships

In terms of the treatment from Malaysians, some of the participants, especially Pakistanis and Bangladeshis migrant workers, have experienced harassment from a few members of local community.

Tapi dia itu..kita nak..—pagi, lima ke enam ke (jam) malam, sembilan ke sepuluh ke, kitaorang kadang-kadang..diorang ada kacau. Bukan kitaorang aja. Banyak orang ada macam itu. Kena macam itu. Dia kena orang rompak ka apa ka. Orang mana punya? Orang India. Memang ada. (P10, Bangladesh)

This is the black Tamil people. They're making too much disturb to foreigner. This area is ok. But another place, I was living Sri Sentosa before then I first come..new. 11 o'clock, I'm going to—I go to, uh, ..to buy something at shop. 11 o'clock. Then I come back to buy..—come behind me and show me knife. They tell me, "What you have? Give me." But I not give (). But a lot of another cases I see, even two, three Pakistani..one, two Bangladeshi also, uh, get..gang people (). (P13, Pakistan)

4.3.3 Life as a migrant worker

This theme is further split into four categories: language barriers, treatment by employer, work experience and lifestyle.

Language barriers

For migrant workers whose first languages are not related to the Malay language, language barriers is one of the issue that they encountered at the beginning of their life as a migrant worker in Malaysia.

Ada itu immigration punya website, Malaysia punya tu government punya website tapi itu bahasa...itu tulisan beza banyak, er, bahasa dengan kita cakap itu tak sama. Tapi biasa, orang cakap itu saya paham. Tapi tulisan itu punya bahasa, apa itu cakap saya tak paham. Itu copy, paste, google translate, lepas tu Bangladesh punya bahasa, macam ni, macam tekan, voice dia keluar. (P2, Bangladesh)

Yang pertama dulu, itu..kita datang sini, kalau diorang cakap, ha, itu kita bengang. Tahunya makan..kerja, makan, kerja. Uang pun tak tahu. Ni nilainya berapa, nilainya berapa..tak tahu. Langsung tak tahu. (P9, Indonesia)

As a way to cope this problem, the English language was used a lingua franca. This was particularly common among Bangladeshi and Pakistani migrant workers.

Kalau saya tak faham, saya minta cakap English ini macam ada, “Saya tak faham”. Kalau dia faham, boleh cakap English. Kalau dia tak faham English, dia Melayu itu biasa guna, dia cakap senang lagi, saya cakap itu macam. (P1, Bangladesh)

Tapi dia ada itu..bahasa English, (faham) sikit lah. Itu orang boleh..cepat pandai lah. (P10, Bangladesh)

Treatment by employer

Migrant workers also had an issue where they received negative treatment from their employer. This treatment includes usage of harsh language, giving huge workload that did not fit the meagre salary and restriction the mobility of the migrant worker.

Dia selalu marah. He uses bad language. I cried. One day, I run. (P1, Bangladesh)

Dia belum bayar lagi. Dia simpan saya punya gaji (). Itu last month punya gaji pun belum dapat. (P1, Bangladesh)

Saya (masa tu) semua kerja, kak. Basuh pinggan. Kalau udah ramai, tolong basuh pinggan. Potong sayur. (). Yang tukang masak cuti, saya yang tolong masak. Gaji 500 je. (P6, Indonesia)

Permit saya dipegang., passport saya terlepas enam bulan. Pastu enam bulan, dia tak mau uruskan balik. Jadi (pergi) balik kosong lah. (P6, Indonesia)

Work experience

For the migrant workers, the money is one of the main aspect of their migration experience. Some participants also took up side jobs alongside their main jobs in order to gain more money to be sent to their family. As a result, these participants have a busy schedule as they work long hours.

Lifestyle

Most of the migrant workers lead a frugal life in order to save money. They share living spaces with other migrant workers and cook their own meals to avoid incurring any extra costs.

4.4 Discussion

From the above findings on construction of identity, strategies that were employed during the process and common themes in migrant narratives, there are some issues that can be summarised. This section further discusses the findings and how they seek to address the research gap and objectives of the study as previously mentioned in Chapter 1. Discussions will begin with findings from the narrative analysis before moving on the ones from the thematic analysis.

The first objective of the study concerns with construction of identities and how they are being constructed and managed in narratives. In order to answer this objective, a narrative analysis was done where the positioning method from Bamberg's Positioning Theory was employed as an analytical tool. Findings show that positioning is not just a method to identify identities in narratives but also as a way to construct those identities. Participants are found employing various discursive strategies of positioning and linguistic devices during construction and management of identities. Management of identities includes maintaining and rejecting ascribed identities. Understanding how these strategies are utilised, helps to give an idea on how migrants see themselves in local, interactive and social settings. In an instance where they see themselves as inferior, migrant workers aligned themselves to other character as a narrator to either build an identity a stronger self-identity or assign agency to themselves to prescribe identity on other characters to justify the initial identity.

The second objective is regarding the common themes found in the narratives. For the thematic analysis, Braun and Clarke's Six-Phases of Thematic Analysis (2006) and Saldana's coding model (2009) were utilised. Thematic analysis helped to draw out macro topics or master narratives that encapsulate the entire narrative. By identifying common themes, how migrant workers are being seen or how they think that they are being seen as can be understood. Some of the themes found are similar to those found in Dannecker's 2005 study on Bangladeshi migrant workers such as harassment from members of the Indian community. This means those issues that the migrant workers face still remain unsolved.

The research gap of the study which aims to contribute to the body of knowledge in narrative identity study among migrant workers in Malaysia and further understands their needs and concerns while living in the country is filled through the findings of the analyses done.

4.5 Summary

From the results, it can be summarised that there are various discursive strategies of positioning and linguistic devices that were employed during identity construction in migrant narratives. These strategies also aided in the management of identities where participants as a narrator are able to maintain self-constructed identity or reject identities that was ascribed to them. On the other hand, thematic analysis reveals common themes found in the narratives that also served as the master narratives. These master narratives or social discourse help to give insight on issues and concerns that migrant workers face throughout their experiences being in the country. Overall, findings of the study have contributed to the body of knowledge in the study of narrative identity in migrant worker narratives.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an overall conclusion of the study. It begins with an overview of the research findings, followed by recommendations for future studies and ends with a concluding remarks that summarises the research and its findings a whole.

5.1 Summary of findings

The aim of this study is to analyse on the construction of identities and common themes in autobiographical narratives among migrant workers in Selangor, Malaysia. The specific objectives examined in this study were:

1. To examine how identities are being constructed and managed by the migrant workers.
2. To explore the common themes found in the narratives.

In order to fulfil these objectives, the study employed two types of analysis: narrative analysis and thematic analysis. The study uses qualitative research design and methods such semi-structured interviews for data collection and positioning theory for data analysis. For data collection, semi-structured interviews were carried out on 15 migrant workers that were selected through purposive sampling. The participants were from three different countries: Indonesia, Pakistan and Bangladesh. All of them are in their adulthood and work in the services sector. The interviews were recorded and were later transcribed to produce 15 transcriptions.

In the first level of analysis, which was the narrative analysis, the collected narrative data were analysed using Bamberg's Positioning Theory (1997). By using the theory, the data were examined through three level of positioning to identify and analyse construction of identity in the narrative. Level 1 positioning involves the positioning of the narrator with other characters or social actors in the story world. Meanwhile, in the level 2 positioning, the narrator position themselves in the interactive setting, which is with the interviewer. The level 3 positioning, on the other hand, the narrator positioned themselves to wider social discourse or the master narratives. The findings of the analysis reveal that participants employed discursive strategies of direct positioning, (de)agentivisation, involvement, and collectivisation as well as linguistic devices of constructed dialogue, pronouns, attributes and collocation during identity construction. Those strategies were also used in managing identities where participants can maintain a self-identity or reject ascribed identities. The analysis also reveals agency as an important aspect in identity and positioning.

The second level of analysis is in regard to the thematic analysis. In the analysis, Braun and Clarke's 6-Phases of Thematic Analysis (2006) model was used as an overall guideline. The analysis also involved a coding process so findings were presented using a slightly modified version of a coding model from Saldana (2009). Three overarching themes were identified from the analysis: Motivation of the migration, identity as a migrant worker, and life as a migrant worker. The themes were further split into categories which involved different contexts.

Overall, the findings have contributed to the aim of the study by revealing the different sides of migrant workers and drawing out master narratives that help to understand the issues and concerns that they face throughout their migrant experience in Malaysia.

5.2 Recommendations for future research

The present study used Bamberg's Positioning Theory to conduct narrative analysis. The theory is very well-known among researchers in the narrative identity field and has been employed in many studies in that genre. While the theory is effective in analysing one context of narrative identity, it might be not as effective in another. In the case of this research where study objectives deal with the 'how' of narrative identities, Bamberg's theory is not as effective since the theory is found to be more useful in analysing the 'what' to reveal types of identities. Bamberg's theory also lacks a proper guideline on how the theory can be achieved in a research. This view is supported by Vågan (2011) and Blundell (2016) who discussed this issue in their studies. A recommendation for future research in regards to this issue is to either employ other positioning analysis strategies alongside Bamberg's or choose an entirely new theoretical framework.

Another recommendation for a future study with a similar nature is to conduct the data collection process using a mixture of different methods - such as interviews and observations - and in a much longer time frame. According to Deppermann (2015), discourse analysts have a problem of simply assuming the existence of societal power relations and power-sensitive identity categories such as race and gender in discourse. To overcome this issue, De Fina (2013) constructed a strong foundation on ethnographic knowledge and went through a huge amount of interview data. Therefore, this recommendation is suggested to reduce biasness that may occurs in the study by the researcher.

Other recommendations include utilising an interpreter during data collection process to overcome language barriers between the interviewer and the interviewee and focusing on

migrant workers with backgrounds that differs from the ones in this study such as non-Muslims and underage migrant workers.

5.3 Conclusion

Despite its limitations, the research did produce some findings that could serve as a part of the knowledge base in the field of narrative identity study of migrant workers in Malaysia. By exploring macro topics in migrant narratives, this study also managed to shed some light on some of the issues that migrant workers in Malaysia face throughout their migration experience. With this knowledge, readers not only gain a better understanding of migrant workers, but are able to apply that knowledge in other areas of life such as in academic studies and law making.

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APPENDIX 1 – Interview Consent Form



Faculty of Language and Communication UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK

CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH INTERVIEW

Research Title:

A Narrative Analysis on Experiences as Migrant Workers in Selangor, Malaysia

I agree to participate in a research project conducted by **Siti Sarrah Binti Abdul Mohsin** from **Universiti Malaysia Sarawak** in Sarawak, Malaysia.

1. I have received sufficient information about this research project and understand my role in it. The purpose of my participation as an interviewee in this project and the future processing of my personal data has been explained to me and are is clear.
2. My participation as an interviewee in this project is completely voluntary. There is no explicit or implicit coercion whatsoever to participate.
3. I allow the researcher to take notes during the interview. I also may allow the recording of the interview and subsequent dialogue by audio/video tape. It is clear to me that in case I do not want the interview and dialogue to be taped I am fully entitled to withdraw from participation.
4. I have the right not to answer questions. If I feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview session, I have the right to withdraw from the interview and ask that the data collected prior to the withdrawal will be deleted.
5. I have been given the explicit guarantee that the researcher will not identify me by name in any reports using information obtained from this interview, that my confidentiality as a participant in this study remains secure.

6. I have carefully read and fully understood the points and statements of this form. All my questions were answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.
7. I obtained a copy of this consent form co-signed by the interviewer.

_____ Participant's Signature	_____ Date
_____ Researcher's Signature	_____ Date

For further information, please contact:

Siti Sarrah Binti Abdul Mohsin (017-3359040)

APPENDIX 2 – Transcription notation

Symbol	Name	Use
[text]	Brackets	Indicates the start and end points of overlapping speech.
=	Equal Sign	Indicates the break and subsequent continuation of a single interrupted utterance.
(# of seconds)	Timed Pause	A number in parentheses indicates the time, in seconds, of a pause in speech.
(.)	Micropause	A brief pause, usually less than 0.2 seconds.
,	Comma	Indicates a temporary rise or fall in intonation.
-	Hyphen	Indicates an abrupt halt or interruption in utterance.
>text<	Greater than / Less than symbols	Indicates that the enclosed speech was delivered more rapidly than usual for the speaker.
<text>	Less than / Greater than symbols	Indicates that the enclosed speech was delivered more slowly than usual for the speaker.
°	Degree symbol	Indicates whisper or reduced volume speech.
<u>underline</u>	Underlined text	Indicates the speaker is emphasizing or stressing the speech.
(text)	Parentheses	Speech which is unclear or in doubt in the transcript.
((italic text))	Double Parentheses	Annotation of non-verbal activity.